

Boating & Fishing



STATE SENATOR 13th District

JOHN PAPPAGEORGE

Dear Friend:

In Michigan, you are never more than six miles from a lake or stream, or a fairly short drive from one of our magnificent Great Lakes. If you love to boat or fish, it's a great place to call home!

The Senate has made protecting our water resources a top priority and I want to share some of our most recent efforts with you. Along with a legislative report, this newsletter provides safety tips and a helpful resource guide. I hope you find it informative.

As always, I am interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas on preserving Michigan's outdoor heritage and natural resources.

Whether you enjoy Michigan's water wonderland by boating on, fishing in or just enjoying one of our Great Lakes, inland lakes or rivers and streams, I hope you and your family have a great summer!

Sincerely,

John Pappageorge
State Senator
13th District



Boating & Fishing

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SENATOR PAPPAGEORGE URGES ACTION TO STOP FEDERAL PERMITTING

I recently supported a measure urging Congress to enact the Clean Boating Act of 2008. Senate Resolution 179 encourages immediate action on federal legislation (S. 2766) that will prevent owners of small, recreational boats from having to buy the same discharge permits required of commercial ships beginning this September.



The requirement stems from a federal court ruling that was intended to address the ballast water discharges of ocean-going vessels, but included all discharges from all vessels.

While commercial ships are largely responsible for the spread of aquatic invasive species, recreational boat discharges are completely different.

The new federal requirement would not only be a tremendous burden and inconvenience to Michigan boat owners, but unnecessary as recreational boat discharges are already regulated under a number of state and federal laws.

Michigan boaters can help protect our lakes from the spread of invasive species without a federal permit, by following state guidelines and properly cleaning their boats.

2008 MICHIGAN FISHING GUIDE

Copies of the 2008 Michigan Fishing Guide and the Inland Trout and Salmon Guide are available from license vendors around the state and online at www.michigan.gov/dnr. Anglers should be aware of the Major Regulation Changes listed in the fishing guide on page 3, including:

Statewide – Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) Regulations

- Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia is a virus that affects fish and has been found in several Michigan water bodies. New regulations are in effect to reduce the spread of this pathogen.

Statewide – Amphibian and Reptile Regulations

- The commercial harvest of amphibians and reptiles is prohibited.

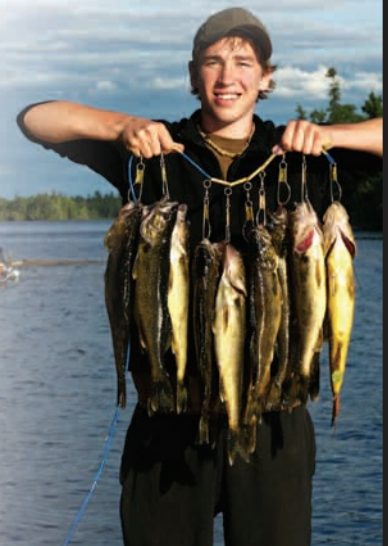
Upper Peninsula Season Extension – Walleye, Northern Pike and Muskellunge

- The closing date for the walleye, northern pike and muskellunge fishing season in the Upper Peninsula has been extended from the last day in February to March 15.

Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River – Lake Sturgeon Catch and Release Season

- A catch and release lake sturgeon season has been added. Anglers may fish for lake sturgeon from Oct. 1 - Nov. 30, but the harvest of lake sturgeon is prohibited during this time. All anglers targeting lake sturgeon need to obtain a nontransferable sturgeon tag prior to fishing for sturgeon.

Check the guide for more specific information on these major regulation changes.



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BILL REGULATES AIRBOATS

You may not see many airboats in Michigan, but when they're out on the water, there's no mistaking them. Airboats are flat bottomed vessels powered by an aircraft engine with a propeller above the stern.

The Senate passed legislation earlier this spring to reinstate noise restrictions and environmental protections. SB 1234 will limit airboats to idling speed when they are near residences between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., as well as in waters that are less than two feet deep.

Airboats are becoming more common on Michigan waters. Some sportsmen use them to fish or hunt waterfowl in mud or shallow waters. Others use them for ice fishing or ice rescues in the winter.

PAPPAGEORGE VOTES TO CONTROL SPORTS FISH PREDATOR

Legislation signed into law last year takes aim at a winged threat to sport and game fish. Public Act 47 of 2007 (Senate Bill 354) requires the DNR to manage a program to control the double-crested cormorant, a large fish-eating bird. Another part of the new law requires the state to work with other Great Lakes states in a regional effort to reduce cormorant damage.

Adult cormorants eat about a pound of fish a day, typically feeding on small fish like rainbow smelt, bass and yellow perch. This has had a devastating impact on local fish populations in areas affected by these birds.

Because cormorants are federally protected under migratory bird laws, this new law is an important step in getting their population under control.



SAFE BOATING – the Basics

- 1. Wear Your Life Jacket.** Always. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that 87 percent of those who drowned while boating were not wearing a life jacket. The number one precaution boaters can take to stay safe on the water is to wear a life preserver.
- 2. Stay Sober.** It is illegal to operate a boat or personal watercraft under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol is a factor in one third of all recreational boating fatalities.
- 3. Maintain a Safe Speed and Stay Alert.** Most boating accidents are caused by operator errors. Be ready for other boats, swimmers, skiers or shallow waters.
- 4. Take a Boating Safety Course.** Know the rules and always boat with safety in mind.
- 5. Keep your Boat in Safe Working Order.** Make sure your craft meets state and federal requirements and is properly equipped. Request a vessel safety check at: www.vesselsafetycheck.org.
- 6. File a Float Plan.** Let someone on shore know where you're going and when you plan to return.



Check the **Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities** to stay on top of Michigan boating rules and regulations. Access it online at www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/.



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PAPPAGEORGE SUPPORTS WATER PROTECTION BILLS

Boaters and anglers who enjoy Michigan's lakes, rivers and streams know firsthand the importance of conserving our state's extraordinary water resources. I want to let you know about Senate legislation I supported to help protect our waters now and for future generations.

Senate Bill 860 adopts a science-based water withdrawal assessment process. Along with site analysis, the assessment process uses a computer tool to determine if a proposed large scale withdrawal would be harmful to state water levels or other natural resources. This landmark tool specifically focuses on the health of the fish population as the most significant indicator of the health of water-dependent natural resources.

Another bill, SB 212, adopts the Great Lakes Basin Compact. The compact develops common measures for each state in the basin to regulate in-state withdrawals and prohibits out-of-basin water diversion. With passage in the Senate, Michigan is one step closer to approving the agreement, which has been signed into law by Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota and New York.

The bill package, Senate Bills 212, 858-860, 723 and 727, awaits action in the House. The legislation has support from many groups, including the Michigan United Conservation Clubs.



STAY ON TOP OF WATERCRAFT REGISTRATION RULES

All watercraft on Michigan waters, including privately-owned lakes and waterways, must be registered with the Department of State (unless it is exempt) and display a registration decal. Once a registration number has been assigned, it cannot be transferred to another watercraft.



Exemptions include:

- watercraft 16 ft. or less, propelled by oars or paddles, and not used for rental or commercial purposes,
- non-motorized canoes and kayaks not used for rental or commercial purposes, rafts, surfboards, sailboards, and swim floats, regardless of length,
- watercraft registered in another state and used only temporarily in Michigan.

For most watercraft the registration fee is based on length. All registrations expire on March 31 in the third year of issuance.



FISH CONSUMPTION GUIDE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Eating fish has many health benefits. However, there may be health risks from chemical contaminants found in some fish if those fish are eaten too often.

The Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide provides advice by water body, fish species, and fish length, as well as tips for cooking and cleaning fish. Access the guide at www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic - click on Michigan Fish Advisory

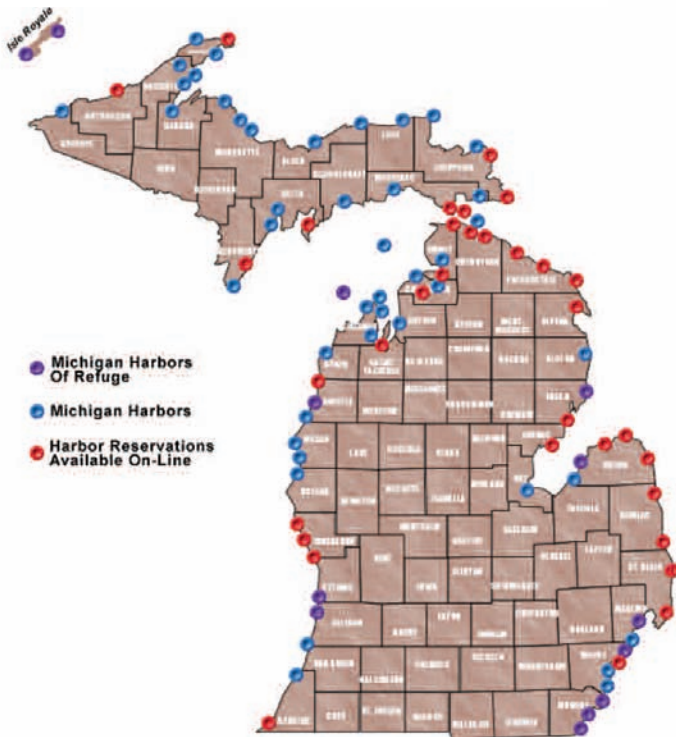
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HARBOR MAP:

<http://www.michigandnr.com/ParksandTrails/harbormap.aspx>



BOATERS CAN HELP KEEP OUR WATERS SAFE

Michigan boaters can lend a hand to homeland security efforts by reporting suspicious activity around their waters, ports and docks. Similar to a neighborhood watch, America's Waterway Watch is sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Boaters should not approach or challenge anyone acting suspiciously. Call the National Response Center at 877-24WATCH with concerns or information. For immediate danger to life or property, call 911.

More information on the program is available on the Coast Guard website at www.americaswaterwaywatch.org.

RESOURCES

BOATING

Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities: www.boat-ed.com/mi/handbook/

Harbor Reservations: Call 1-800-447-2757
www.midnrreservations.com/index.cfm

Boating Access Sites:
www.mcgi.state.mi.us/MRBIS/

Boating Safety Classes:
www.dnr.state.mi.us/recnsearch/

NOAA Marine Forecasts and Weather Information:
www.crh.noaa.gov/grr/marine/

U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety:
<http://www.uscgboating.org>

Michigan Boating Industries Association
<http://www.mbia.org/>

FISHING

2006-2008 Michigan Fishing Guide:
www.michigan.gov/dnr

DNR Fisheries Division: 517-373-1280

Weekly Fishing Report: Call 1-517-373-0908
<http://michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10364-34956--,00.html>

Buy a Fishing License online:
www.mdnr-elicense.com/welcome.asp

Michigan Master Angler State Records:
www.michigandnr.com/MASTERANGLER/

Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide:
www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic

Report a Poacher (RAP) Hotline:
1-800-292-7800